

# The Doomwood Curse, by Jacqueline Rayner

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## [Part One]

(The Tardis materialises, door opens.)

DOCTOR: There, what did I tell you?

CHARLOTTE: You don't mean to say the Tardis actually landed us in the right place for once?

(Door closes.)

DOCTOR: For once?

CHARLOTTE: I mean, er, I thought it wasn't usually so accurate.

DOCTOR: Poppycock! The Tardis is one hundred per cent reliable.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, absolutely.

DOCTOR: Yes. Well, do you have the book?

CHARLOTTE: One copy of "Rookwood" and that robot reminder thing too.

REMINDER BOT: This is an automatic reminder from the Archive of Alexandria Four. You are in possession of an overdue book. Penalties will be exacted for overdue, lost or damaged items.

CHARLOTTE: Chirpy little thing, isn't it?

DOCTOR: Which rather belies the nature of the penalties the Alexandrians exact.

CHARLOTTE: Which in the case of an item overdue by three hundred years...

DOCTOR: Would be many and painful. However, as we're returning the volume mere moments after I borrowed it in the first place...

CHARLOTTE: Are you allowed to do that sort of thing?

DOCTOR: Allowed?

CHARLOTTE: I just thought - well, you know, if you travel in Time there must be some laws to abide by, otherwise - well, things might get a bit... confusing.

DOCTOR: Well, if indeed there are any laws of Time, I think I can safely say that they're none of your business, hmm? Anyway, whose fault is it that we found ourselves in this predicament in the first place?

CHARLOTTE: I just wanted something to read in the bath. How was I to know that taking the book out of storage would summon that silly Reminder Bot? Then you had to whisk us straight here. I've still got shampoo in my hair.

DOCTOR: You had been in the bath for four hours by the time the robot turned up. I think I can be forgiven for assuming you were clean by that point.

CHARLOTTE: I was nearly on the last page too. If the laws of Time are being, you know, bent a bit, couldn't I at least finish the book before we return it?

DOCTOR: Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE: All right, I'll be quiet now.

DOCTOR: Which is more than you can say for whoever's doing that.

CHARLOTTE: They're in the next aisle.

DOCTOR: Come on, let's peek round the corner quietly.

GREL: Good facts! Bad facts! More facts! Bad facts. Find facts. More facts!

DOCTOR: I don't believe it. What are they doing here?

CHARLOTTE: They? Who's they? Students?

DOCTOR: Far worse than that. Grel.

GREL 1: (male) Ah! Good fact. I have found a fact. Fact. It was the best of times. Additional fact. It was the worst of times.

GREL 2: (female) Bad fact. These facts cannot both be facts.

GREL 3: (female) Fact. When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains however improbable must be the truth.

GREL 4: (male) Bad fact. Inconclusive speculation. Not fact. There may be other facts. Find facts.

GREL: Find facts! Find facts!

GREL 1: Ah! Fact. I have found a fact. Good fact. This is the house that Jack built.

GREL 4: Query. This establishment was built by Jack?

GREL 1: Ah, ah, ah. Additional fact. This is the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

GREL 4: Bad fact. There is no malt here.

GREL 1: Additional fact. This is the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built. Ah, ah. Further fact. This is the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

GREL 4: Stop, stop! Bad, bad fact. Fact. There is no cat. Fact. There is no rat. Fact. There is no malt. Fact. This house was not built by Jack. Fact. All these facts are bad facts.

GREL 2: Fact. We will destroy all bad facts. Fact. Only good facts will remain.

GREL: Good facts! Best facts! Best facts, good facts...! (marching off)

CHARLOTTE: Doctor, who or what are the Grel?  
DOCTOR: A cephalopodic species obsessed with facts.  
CHARLOTTE: I can see that. So why are they rooting around in the fiction section?  
DOCTOR: Good question.  
GREL 1: Bring forth the Factualiser.  
GREL: Feed the Factualiser. Feed the bad facts.  
(Whumph of flames.)  
DOCTOR: And there's your answer. Burning books, or the modern equivalent.  
CHARLOTTE: Well, here's a fact. I'm not going to let them. Doctor, create a distraction.  
DOCTOR: Create a distraction, me? May I remind you that I'm the one who carries out the clever plans while other people create distra...  
CHARLOTTE: Thanks Doctor, I knew I could rely on you.  
DOCTOR: What...? Charlotte! Charlotte! (sighs) Distraction, eh? Grel, I've got some facts for you.  
GREL: Fact. Find facts.  
DOCTOR: Fact. The next thing I tell you will be true. Additional fact. The last thing I told you was a lie.  
GREL 1: Fact. If the first fact is a fact. Then the second fact cannot be a fact, yet it is a fact.  
GREL 4: Bad fact. This is the true fact. If the second fact is a fact, then the first fact cannot be a fact.  
GREL 1: Additional fact. The second fact cannot then be a fact.  
DOCTOR: Hurry up, Charlotte.  
GREL 4: Conclusion - I cannot reach a conclusion. If neither the first nor second facts are facts, then which fact...?  
GREL 2: Fact. Er, there is a human stealthily approaching the Factualiser machine.  
GREL 1: Good fact. She is not armed. Inference. She will be unable to harm the machine.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh yes? Here's a fact for you. The pen is mightier than the sword.  
GREL 4: Bad fact. Fact. The sword is a large bladed weapon. Fact. The pen is a small writing implement. Therefore...  
CHARLOTTE: Hi-yah!  
GREL 5: (male) Bad fact. She has hit the machine with a book.  
(Bang.)  
GREL 1: Worse fact. The machine has exploded.  
GREL 2: Even worse fact. Our plans have failed. Retreat! Retreat!  
(Zaps.)  
DOCTOR: Now look what you've done.  
CHARLOTTE: (coughs) Done? I've just saved this Archive.  
DOCTOR: To Rookwood! Look what you've done to Rookwood.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh no! (stamping) Well, that's the flames out at least.  
DOCTOR: We can't return it in this condition.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh...  
DOCTOR: Back to the Tardis.

(Tardis door opens.)  
CHARLOTTE: Oh, no chance of finishing the book now, it's little more than cinders. Doctor, can you tell me how it ends?  
DOCTOR: Mmm? Alas, I cannot, I haven't read it.  
(Tardis doors close.)  
CHARLOTTE: But you've had it for three hundred years. And I thought you'd read everything.  
DOCTOR: Everything is rather a tall order, even for me. And a gothic romance? Hardly the epitome of literature.  
CHARLOTTE: Then why did you borrow it in the first place?  
DOCTOR: Well, I wasn't always the man I am today.  
CHARLOTTE: (sotto) Don't I just know it.  
DOCTOR: Mmm? I'm sorry?  
CHARLOTTE: I mean, I know that tastes can change.  
DOCTOR: Exactly. By the time I found time to read it, I'd passed the stage where such a thing seemed desirable.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh, Doctor, but it's thrilling. Curses and tombs, revenge from beyond the grave, scheming gypsies and - highwaymen, of course. Dashing, romantic highwaymen.  
DOCTOR: Oh yes, of course, I remember now. Rookwood. The book that invented Dick Turpin.  
CHARLOTTE: Er, no, Doctor. I think you'll find Dick Turpin was a real person.  
DOCTOR: Yeah, but he was neither dashing nor romantic. Turpin was just another obscure criminal until William Harrison Ainsworth put him in that book and credited him with every highwayman tale he could find.  
CHARLOTTE: You mean, Turpin didn't really do all those things? That thrilling ride to York after he'd accidentally shot his partner dead?

DOCTOR: I'm afraid not.

CHARLOTTE: Oh. So no clues in real life as to how the book ends? Luke had just opened the box given to him by Dick Turpin, containing a poisoned lock of his dead bride Sybil's hair, and he put it to his lips and fell down dead.

DOCTOR: Sounds a most edifying tome.

CHARLOTTE: Don't scoff. It was positively marvellous. I think I'm going to imagine that virtue triumphs at the end, and the hero and heroine will marry at last. After all, that's how books *should* end.

DOCTOR: Well, we can't have that.

CHARLOTTE: We can't have virtue triumphing?

DOCTOR: We can't have you imagining how it ends. I'm sure Mister Ainsworth can spare me another copy of his positively marvellous masterpiece.

CHARLOTTE: Ah. And we get a replacement copy for the Archive.

DOCTOR: Correct. That was a first edition you destroyed, and the Alexandrians will want an exact duplicate. Here, catch.

REMINDER BOT: This is an automatic reminder from the Archive of Alexandria Four. You are in possession of an overdue book. Penalties will be exacted for overdue, lost or damaged items.

CHARLOTTE: And what happens if we don't return the complete copy to the Archive?

DOCTOR: Well, the Alexandrian motto is, let the punishment suit the crime. For example, people who crease spines may find themselves suffering a similar fate. So, for a book which has been charred virtually beyond recognition...

CHARLOTTE: Oh dear. We'd better go. To Rookwood.

(The Tardis dematerialises.)

(The Tardis materialises, door opens.)

CHARLOTTE: Oh. It's very dark. Can you open the door wider, I need a bit more light to see. Oh. Well, this isn't right.

DOCTOR: Mmm? Oh. No, it isn't.

CHARLOTTE: Still, I suppose a Gothic writer probably would feel at home in a crypt. The book begins in one after all.

DOCTOR: We should be in literary London. Tea with Thackeray, dinner with Dickens.

CHARLOTTE: Instead of supper with skeletons.

DOCTOR: Yeah. Oh well, we're just slightly off course, that's all. And all the bones are shut safely away in their caskets. (blowing dust) Lady... Barbara Broomwood, born 1696, died 1720. Hmm. Not been here that long. I'd say no more than twenty years. There. We're only about a hundred years out.

CHARLOTTE: What happened to a hundred per cent reliable?

DOCTOR: Charlotte, a century is a mere drop in the ocean of Time. Oh, come on, as we're here we might as well explore. As our acquaintanceship develops you'll discover that there is no place or time that does not hold a wonder of its own.

(Tardis door closes.)

CHARLOTTE: Don't shut the door, I...! I can't see.

DOCTOR: It's all right. The exit's over this way.

CHARLOTTE: Exit? Why would you need an exit from a tomb? Why, do the dead walk, then?

DOCTOR: Charlotte! In our short acquaintance I had not formed the impression that you were a young lady to be driven to hysterics by a mere hint of the macabre.

CHARLOTTE: No. No, I'm not, I'm... I'm sorry, I don't know what came over me.

DOCTOR: Come on. Let's get you out into the fresh air.

SYBIL: Susan? Susan! Where is that girl?

JOHN: I sent her to fetch your fur mantle. These Spring evenings can bring a chill, Aunt Sybil.

SYBIL: What a thoughtful boy you are, John. Oh. I call you a boy, yet on the eve of your wedding, how can you be other than a man? Ah, how proud your mother would be, could she see you now.

JOHN: Yet she would be proud too of the aunt who has been as a mother to me. And now, as mother of my bride-to-be, mother in name too. Ah, here comes Susan.

SUSAN: Yes. You called, my lady?

SYBIL: I did. Now Susan, have you seen that all the rooms have fresh bedding, should any guests arrive this night in want of accommodation?

SUSAN: I have, my Lady.

RALPH: What's that, Sybil? Guests arriving tonight? Who's that, then?

SYBIL: Ah well, I merely wish to be prepared in case...

DOCTOR: Hello?

RALPH: Oh, looks like it was a wise precaution. Who are those two, eh?

JOHN: They must be friends of Eleanor. Their faces are not familiar to me. And do you see their clothes?

SYBIL: Be kind, John. Perhaps an accident has befallen them.

DOCTOR: Hello, I'm the Doctor and this is Charlotte.

RALPH: Ah, yes. Friends of Eleanor, I understand. Pleased to meet you.

CHARLOTTE: No, we...

DOCTOR: Eleanor, yes, yes, yes, yes. Oh - she's, er, not here at the moment, is she?

JOHN: It's bad luck for the bride to see the groom the night before the wedding.

DOCTOR: So it is.

SYBIL: My daughter will arrive in the morning. I did not wish her to travel overnight. There are known to be highwaymen in the area.

CHARLOTTE: Highwaymen? How thrilling.

RALPH: Why, I'm glad you think so, child. Not the word I'd have used. Vicious cut-throats, all of them. Oh! Where are my manners? Welcome to Broomwood Manor. Sir Ralph Broomwood at your service. My late wife's sister Sybil.

SYBIL: Charlotte, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Very pleased to meet you.

RALPH: And my son John, who you must have heard of from Eleanor.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, yes, of course.

JOHN: Has your driver taken your luggage to the house?

DOCTOR: Oh, er, actually, it should be following on later. Some slight transport problems.

SYBIL: There! I said you must have had an accident. Did you walk, then?

DOCTOR: Oh, just the last part of the way. We came across the grounds.

CHARLOTTE: Past the crypt.

SYBIL: Child, you are cold.

CHARLOTTE: No, no, I was just...

SYBIL: Susan, give Charlotte that mantle, and take her into the house.

SUSAN: Here you go, Miss.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, er, thank you. Doctor?

DOCTOR: I'll follow along shortly, Charlotte.

SUSAN: This way, Miss. Just through the trees.

CHARLOTTE: Thank you.

DOCTOR: What a marvellous landscape. Sir Ralph.

RALPH: Mmm.

DOCTOR: It'd impress even Capability Brown.

RALPH: Capability who?

DOCTOR: Oh, perhaps I'm being a little previous. Definitely one to keep your eye on, though. Lancelot Brown, the future of landscape gardening. Why, I once saw him move an entire lake six feet to the left...

CHARLOTTE: This is very kind of you. Susan, was it?

SUSAN: Yes, Miss. Not at all, Miss.

CHARLOTTE: Tell me, are there really highwaymen around here?

SUSAN: There are.

CHARLOTTE: Fearless, noble knights of the road.

SUSAN: Indeed? It must be some other men you're thinking of. The most vicious of them all haunts this neighbourhood, and I tell you that I've met him, and he's none of the things you say.

CHARLOTTE: You've met a highwayman? Oh, tell me about it, do.

SUSAN: As you wish, Miss. It was in my last position. A good man my master was, by the name of Mister Leeves. He did not much go into society and few visitors troubled us. But the household was a happy one, until that night.

(Knock on door.)

LEEVES: I am expecting no one. Susan, be so good as to see...

(Door bursts open.)

SUSAN: Mister Leeves!

TURPIN: Shut your mouth, girl. There's none around to hear you. Fielder, Gregory, search upstairs.

LEEVES: How dare you enter a gentleman's home in this way.

TURPIN: You can shut yours too, unless you've a mind to tell us where your treasures are. Save us the bother of finding them. What are these gewgaws?

(Breaking glass.)

LEEVES: You'll get nothing from me.

TURPIN: Wheeler? Wheeler?

WHEELER: Hmm?

TURPIN: Take the girl. Start searching at the back.

WHEELER: Come here, lass.

SUSAN: Oh!

WHEELER: Come here.

TURPIN: I'll make the old man talk.

SUSAN: Let him go!

TURPIN: Wait! Let her go.

SUSAN: Thank you, sir.

TURPIN: Not so fast. That trinket round your neck's too good for a maidservant. I'll have it.

SUSAN: No! That was my mother's. The only thing I have of her.

SUSAN: And then they tortured my master, that good man, till he told them where his valuables were, down to the last brass farthing.

(Leeves groans.)

SUSAN: Master? Master.

TURPIN: Got everything ? Right, let's get out of here.

LEEVEES: I know who you are. Dick Turpin.

CHARLOTTE: Dick Turpin? Oh! How fabulous. Oh, sorry, you were saying...?

TURPIN: So what? Unless you want another visit, you'll never reveal that you were visited by men. Not that you'll be talking much longer, by the looks of you.

(The robbers laugh and leave. Leeves groans.)

SUSAN: Master. Master.

SUSAN: My master died soon afterwards.

CHARLOTTE: But Dick Turpin. I mean, Dick Turpin himself.

SUSAN: Yes, Miss. The most hard, cruel and savage of them all.

CHARLOTTE: The most brave, loyal and dashing of them all.

SUSAN: If you say so, Miss.

CHARLOTTE: Oh. I'm sorry, I'm, I'm not doubting your story, it's just... (sighs) Anyway, how odd that we've landed just where the real Dick Turpin rides. Perhaps I ought to go back and tell the Doctor.

SUSAN: The real Dick Turpin, Miss?

(Wood cracking.)

CHARLOTTE: Just wait here a second Susan.

SUSAN: Miss! Look out, the tree!

CHARLOTTE: What? (crash) It nearly hit me, that huge branch! If you hadn't...

SUSAN: It's all right, Miss.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, the wood must've been rotten. It's not that windy. Oh here, take my hand.

SUSAN: I, I fear that's not the reason, Miss.

DOCTOR: Charlotte! Charlotte!

JOHN: Charlotte? Charlotte.

DOCTOR: Are you all right?

CHARLOTTE: I'm fine.

DOCTOR: Oh.

CHARLOTTE: But if Susan hadn't pushed me out of the way...

RALPH: Oh no. Oh no!

CHARLOTTE: No, honestly, everything's all right.

RALPH: Oh, my child, it is very far from all right. The doom is upon me.

CHARLOTTE: Well, it's me it was nearly upon.

DOCTOR: What do you mean, Sir Ralph?

RALPH: Oh! What an evil curse this is, that neither parent shall live to see their son wed.

JOHN: Don't say such a thing, Father.

RALPH: Oh, you know it as well as I do, John. This is the Doom tree. For when a bough is found, I trow, beneath its shade to lie, ere suns shall rise twice in the skies...

SYBIL: A Doomwood sure shall die.

CHARLOTTE: What did he say?

JOHN: It is the curse of our family. A bough falling from that tree heralds the death of the eldest Doomwood.

RALPH: And I am he. Oh, alas!

DOCTOR: I thought your name was Broomwood.

RALPH: No sir, you are mistaken. Doomwood it is, and this is the Doomwood curse.

DOCTOR: Oh, curses are just superstition. They have no power.

RALPH: Well, tell that to my ancestors, even now mouldering in their graves.

SYBIL: Come inside, Ralph, and we will get you some brandy.

CHARLOTTE: (sotto) Doctor, I have to speak to you. (louder) We'll catch you up.

DOCTOR: What is it?

CHARLOTTE: That rhyme. I've heard it before, or something very like it, and very, very recently.

DOCTOR: Heard it where?

CHARLOTTE: That's the problem. When I try to remember, my mind goes all sort of... fuzzy. I can see the word, I just can't remember.

DOCTOR: See the words? That's interesting. At first you said you'd heard the rhyme before, but perhaps you read it somewhere?

CHARLOTTE: I just don't know. Oh, and there was something else, something I had to tell you. A coincidence, a huge coincidence, but... oh, I can't remember what that was either.

DOCTOR: Charlotte, this doesn't sound like you're merely forgetting things. It must be something to do with your amnesia.

CHARLOTTE: My what?

DOCTOR: Well, the amnesia that's caused you to forget your entire life before you met me.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, yes. I forgot, er, because of my amnesia.

DOCTOR: I think perhaps we'd better return to the Tardis, keep you under observation.

CHARLOTTE: Yes, my head does feel very woolly.

DOCTOR: Come on then.

JOHN: Doctor? Doctor?

DOCTOR: Oh dear, what now?

JOHN: Doctor, it's my father. He has collapsed. Please, you must come quickly.

DOCTOR: I am not actually a medical...

CHARLOTTE: Go, Doctor. I can find my way back on my own.

JOHN: Please, Doctor. I will escort Miss Charlotte to wherever she wants to go.

DOCTOR: Well, all right, then. Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: Yes?

DOCTOR: Key.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, but I've already got one... Oh, yes. (laughs) I forgot that too.

DOCTOR: Terrible thing, amnesia. I'll look in on you soon.

JOHN: My father is in the dining-room, with my aunt.

DOCTOR: Sir Ralph? Sir Ralph?

RALPH: In here.

SYBIL: Ah, Doctor. I fear there is nothing you can do for him.

DOCTOR: Well, I'll be the judge of that.

RALPH: It is the curse. The curse. I feel my life fading.

SYBIL: Here. Take some more brandy.

RALPH: Oh, even the spirit cannot warm my bones. Already Death's icy fingers claw me down into the grave.

DOCTOR: Sir Ralph, I can assure you that no man can be wished to death.

SYBIL: Otherwise you would be long since in your tomb.

RALPH: Not once has the curse proved false since it was laid upon the first Ralph Doomwood many centuries ago. Once the bough has fallen, the oldest Doomwood will die, ere sun shall rise twice in the sky.

DOCTOR: Well, that at least gives you, oh, thirty six hours? Plenty of time to find a way around it.

SYBIL: Or at least time to make peace with your Maker, if you can. Those who are taken with no warning have no such opportunity.

RALPH: Sybil...

SYBIL: You should be full of joy, knowing that you are at last to be reunited with your wife, my sister. She was taken from us so suddenly.

DOCTOR: By the curse?

SYBIL: Her only curse was to marry into this blood-doomed dynasty. You see, Doctor, Sir Ralph - ah, I mean of course the first Sir Ralph - murdered his wife. With her dying breath, she swore revenge.

RALPH: And damned all of us for a crime we did not commit.

SYBIL: Oh, you did not commit that crime, no. Tell me, brother-in-law, why are there no portraits of my sister in this house?

RALPH: Oh, for grief.

SYBIL: Grief or guilt, I tell you.

DOCTOR: Stop this now, both of you! There's something very wrong here.

CHARLOTTE: Thank you, John. I'll, I'll be all right from here.

JOHN: But Charlotte, there is nothing here but the crypt.

CHARLOTTE: I know. There's something in the crypt, something important. The only problem is, I... I don't know what. Oh, I feel like the boy who cried wolf. All this time pretending to have forgotten things, and now, suddenly, I really can't remember.

(Door opens.)

JOHN: I come here sometimes, to talk to my mother.

CHARLOTTE: Your mother?

JOHN: Yes, over there. That tomb is hers. Lady Barbara Doomwood. She has been dead these seventeen years.

CHARLOTTE: I'm sorry.

JOHN: She pined away from grief. My sister, born two years before me, was stolen by gypsies when we were but children. Just a few hours ago it was my greatest sorrow that neither my mother nor sister would see me wed. But now...

CHARLOTTE: Now you're worried about your father.

JOHN: Hmm? Oh, the curse. No, Charlotte. The sorrow that clouds my heart is that I am to wed the wrong woman. I have loved you from the instant I saw you.

CHARLOTTE: John, let go of me.

JOHN: Not until you admit you feel it too.

CHARLOTTE: But I... I don't... I don't... Where are we going?

JOHN: There! With my mother's bones as my witness, dare you deny that you love me too?

CHARLOTTE: Oh, John. (kiss) Oh no, we mustn't. You are to wed Eleanor tomorrow.

JOHN: A fig for Eleanor! You and I must wed this very night.

CHARLOTTE: We have no priest.

JOHN: The priest was due to dine with us. I will intercept him before he reaches the house and bring him to you.

CHARLOTTE: Will I not be with you?

JOHN: No. You must have a wedding gown. Return to the house and find Susan. She will bring you my mother's. You must have a ring too. Ah!

CHARLOTTE: Your mother's ring?

JOHN: She would not begrudge it to you. May it bring you more fortune than it brought her. Embrace me again before you go.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, John...

JOHN: Stay. Something comes between us.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, nothing would must in our way.

JOHN: (laughs) There is something in your pocket, that was my only meaning.

CHARLOTTE: Oh. (laughs) Why, it's a book.

JOHN: Not much of one. It has been in a fire, I think.

CHARLOTTE: Yes. Means nothing to me. Why would I carry such a thing?

JOHN: Leave it here. It can be of no use to you. We will give it to my mother in exchange for her ring.

DOCTOR: Sir Ralph, Lady Sybil, I have a strong suspicion that all is not well here.

RALPH: I've been telling you that.

DOCTOR: No, no, no, listen to me. You are not dying. You cannot die of a curse.

(Ralph gurgles and drops his glass.)

SYBIL: It seems that you can, Doctor. (laughs) Sir Ralph is dead.

## [Part Two]

DOCTOR: I'm afraid so, yes. But not through a curse. Lady Sybil, this brandy was poisoned.

SYBIL: Poisoned?

DOCTOR: Yeah. Where did it come from? Who poured it?

SYBIL: You would have to ask the maid. Not that you will get much sense from her. She has been scaring herself silly telling tales of that rogue Dick Turpin.

DOCTOR: Dick Turpin?

SYBIL: The highwayman.

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, yes, I know. Dick Turpin? Well, that must be the coincidence Charlotte meant to tell me about, but... can it really be a coincidence? Broomwood. Doomwood. Rookwood! Curses and tombs and highwaymen? Something very strange is happening here. Lady Sybil... Lady Sybil? Oh, where's the woman gone?

(Opens door.)

DOCTOR: Lady Sybil? Lady Sybil!

JOHN: Through here, Father. Make haste, the deed must be...

DOCTOR: Ah John, did you see Charlotte safely back to the Tardis?

JOHN: The... the what?

DOCTOR: Oh, er...

JOHN: Let me introduce Father Merring.

DOCTOR: Ah.

JOHN: He has come to, er...

PRIEST: Good evening.

DOCTOR: Ah, here to perform the obsequies, I take it? You priests don't hang around, do you? Sir Ralph's through there.

PRIEST: Sir Ralph? But I thought that...

JOHN: My father? You mean to say he's...?

DOCTOR: I'm so very sorry, John.

JOHN: The curse has fallen on him. (sighs) I would not have wished it like this. Still, at least he cannot stand in our way.

DOCTOR: What, what do you mean? Stand in your way? Whose way?

(Scream.)

JOHN: Charlotte!

PRIEST: It came from upstairs .

DOCTOR: Quickly.

DOCTOR: What's she doing here? She should be safely back in the Tardis.

JOHN: Ah, you will all know soon enough. She has gone to don her wedding gown.

DOCTOR: She's what?

JOHN: This was my mother's chamber.

(Door opens.)

PRIEST: By all the saints!

DOCTOR: Oh no.

JOHN: Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte, my love!

DOCTOR: She's been stabbed.

JOHN: Stabbed to the heart, and my heart dies with her.

DOCTOR: Out of the way! Let me examine her. Charlotte, can you hear me?

(Slaps face.)

DOCTOR: Charley. She's... dead.

JOHN: She wears her bridal gown, yet will never be her bride. Still, let me raise her veil and kiss her one last time to seal, if not our matrimony then at least our undying love. Praise Heaven, it's Susan.

DOCTOR: Your maid?

JOHN: But how did she come to wear my mother's wedding gown?

CHARLOTTE: John, what's happened? I was fetching a needle and thread when... Oh, Susan!

JOHN: Oh, my darling, we thought you dead.

DOCTOR: Oh, Charlotte. Are you all right?

CHARLOTTE: Is that blood upon her bosom? Oh, poor Susan. The gown was too long for me and I bade Susan wear it so I could turn up the hem.

PRIEST: That saved your life, my child.

CHARLOTTE: You think the knife was meant for me? Oh. (faints.)

JOHN: Charlotte.

DOCTOR: I've got you.

PRIEST: Loosen her clothing. Give her air.

DOCTOR: What is it?

JOHN: On her shoulder. There.

DOCTOR: What? Oh, some sort of birthmark, I suppose. Funny. Never noticed it before.

JOHN: Truly I am cursed.

DOCTOR: Oh, what are you talking about now?

DOCTOR: Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, where am I? John? John, my love, are you there?

JOHN: I'll, I'll fetch you some water.

DOCTOR: Oh Charlotte. What happened to you? You were going back to the Tardis.

CHARLOTTE: Tardis?

DOCTOR: Now think, think. Something odd is going on here, and you seem to be at the centre of it. We need to get you away from here.

CHARLOTTE: No! Oh John, don't let him take me away.

JOHN: Ah, here you are. Water.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, thank you.

SYBIL: John? I heard a scream. What has happened?

JOHN: Don't come in, Aunt. You do not wish to see.

SYBIL: Oh, how tragic. The Doctor's young friend...

DOCTOR: Is perfectly all right, thank you very much.

SYBIL: Oh.

CHARLOTTE: And going to marry your nephew.

JOHN: No.

CHARLOTTE: What do you mean?

JOHN: Our love can never be.

CHARLOTTE: What are you saying?

JOHN: You see this? (cloth tears) On my shoulder? I have had this mark since birth.

DOCTOR: Let me see.

CHARLOTTE: How odd. There is a mark on my shoulder too, identical to that.

SYBIL: It is the mark of the Doomwoods.

JOHN: My sister carried that mark. My sister who was carried away by the gypsies so many years ago.

SYBIL: And now, it seems, returned.

CHARLOTTE: No. It cannot be.

DOCTOR: It certainly can't. Charlotte, try to remember. You don't come from here. You can't possibly be this man's sister. You are Charlotte Pollard .

CHARLOTTE: No. Charlotte Doomwood. Oh, how cruel is fate to have reunited me with my family in such a fashion. Oh John, John, how can I live without you?

DOCTOR: Charlotte!

(Glass breaks.)

DOCTOR: Come away from the window. Don't do anything stupid.

CHARLOTTE: Goodbye, John.

DOCTOR + JOHN: No!

(Horse neighs.)

DOCTOR: A horse?

CHARLOTTE: Giddy-up. Away, away!

DOCTOR: A horse?!

PRIEST: Er, my horse.

JOHN: Oh, praise God, I thought she meant to kill herself.

PRIEST: God's hand has guided her away from such a sin.

SYBIL: Even God cannot save her now. Look - another branch falls from the doom tree.

DOCTOR: Charlotte, look out!

(Wood breaks, horse neighs.)

PRIEST: Stay your blasphemy, woman. Once more the girl is saved.

SYBIL: Oh, no she is not.

JOHN: What do you mean? It is I who am now doomed. The falling branch foretells it.

SYBIL: A bough falling from that tree heralds the death of the eldest Doomwood. And the eldest Doomwood is your sister, Charlotte.

DOCTOR: Well, don't just stand there. We've got to stop her.

CHARLOTTE: Onward, on. There is nothing for me at Doomwood but despair.

PRIEST: I cannot even see her. I fear, Mister Doomwood, that your sister is once again lost to you.

DOCTOR: Not if I have anything to do with it. Are there any other horses?

JOHN: No, Doctor. Our carriage has been sent for Eleanor.

PRIEST: I can return to the village, send on steeds to you.

JOHN: Thank you, Father. Please do so.

DOCTOR: I can't just sit around and do nothing while we wait for some horses to turn up. Charlotte is doomed to die before then sun shall rise twice in the sky.

JOHN: I understood that you did not believe in such things as curses, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I don't. But I'm very much afraid that this world does, and I think the answers may lie in a book.

JOHN: A book?

DOCTOR: If only I'd read it. Perhaps there's something in the Tardis data banks. I, er, just need to check on something in the, er, crypt.

JOHN: I'll fetch my pistol from the house. The roads around here can be treacherous at night. Oh, I do hope that Charlotte is safe.

DOCTOR: So do I. Charlotte Pollard could take care of herself, I think, but Charlotte Doomwood, I'm not so sure.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, cruel, cruel fate. Was there ever a girl as unlucky as I? The finding of the ties that bind me to my love is yet the very thing that tears us apart. It means that I must leave him for ever. Surely nothing worse can befall me.

(Pistol shot. Horse neighs.)

TURPIN: Halt!

CHARLOTTE: Whoa!

TURPIN: Your money or your life.

CHARLOTTE: Sir, I have no money.

TURPIN: Then it's your life.  
CHARLOTTE: Help! Help!  
TURPIN: No use hollering. There ain't no one to hear you. Do yourself a favour. Hand over whatever you've got.  
CHARLOTTE: But I have nothing of value, I swear.  
TURPIN: Ha! That's a likely tale. How about you... Hey. Say that again.  
CHARLOTTE: Say what? What is it you want me to say?  
TURPIN: It *is* you. You had me fooled for a moment with all those falderals. I have nothing of value, I swear. Just a silver tongue, eh?  
CHARLOTTE: I... I don't...  
TURPIN: Come closer, so I can see you better.  
CHARLOTTE: I, er... Dick? (Mummerset accent.) Dick Turpin?  
TURPIN: Aye, 'tis I myself. I knew we'd meet again. Gypsy Charlotte, the one and only. My pretty partner in crime. Come, ride alongside me. What say you? Do you fancy a return to the old life a-robbing and a-thieving of those who deserve it?  
CHARLOTTE: There ain't nothing I'd like better.  
TURPIN: Back to the hideout then, eh? I'll garland you with jewels from your cut-throat curls to your felonious feet.  
CHARLOTTE: And the balladeers will sing once more of the daring deeds of Dick Turpin and Gypsy Charlotte.  
TURPIN: Ha, ha! Let us away!

DOCTOR: The book began in a crypt, Charlotte said, like this one. I wonder.  
SYBIL: Hello, Doctor. I saw you heading this way and I came to meet you.  
DOCTOR: Lady Sybil. How appropriate to find you lurking amongst the dead. Here to commit more murder?  
SYBIL: What do you mean?  
DOCTOR: Oh, come, come. It was perfectly obvious that you poisoned your brother-in-law and stabbed the maid.  
SYBIL: You knew? Why did you say nothing?  
DOCTOR: Ah, because there was no one to say it to. Besides, I have a feeling that it's not your fault. Sinister asides, mocking laughter? You weren't like that when we first arrived. You've become some kind of clichéd wicked aunt. Anyway, if my assessment of your motives is correct, no one else is in danger from you.  
SYBIL: He murdered my sister, married her for her fortune, and stole both her riches and her life.  
DOCTOR: And so with Sir Ralph's death you gained both revenge and the return of your family wealth, as John would inherit it, and he was due to marry your daughter. And that would have been that. But then, mmm, I don't know. You overheard something, perhaps?  
SYBIL: That hussy in my beloved sister's wedding gown, declaring that she was going to marry John. I hid until I heard someone leave the room, and then I...  
DOCTOR: Yes, yes, I see. Well, I'm going to find a way to help you, somehow. I'll light a lantern. Things always seem better in the light.  
DOCTOR: There.  
(Sybil screams.)  
DOCTOR: What is it?  
SYBIL: See. My sister's very bones rise from their tomb. She is coming to take her revenge on me, for in my ignorance I tried to take her daughter's life.  
DOCTOR: Someone's raised a coffin lid, that's all.  
SYBIL: No. She walks.  
DOCTOR: I assure you, this yawning sepulchre contains no rising bones. Just perfectly lifeless ones that can't harm anyone.  
SYBIL: Oh no?  
DOCTOR: Ow! Ow! Sybil, no!  
(Thud.)  
DOCTOR [OC]: Let me out.  
SYBIL: No, Doctor. You are the only one who knows of my deeds, but now you will never tell.

DOCTOR: Sybil! Sybil!  
SYBIL [OC]: Save your breath. You have little enough of it.  
(Effort.)  
DOCTOR: Oh, wonderful. I think she's sitting on the lid. Lady Sybil, this isn't the real you.  
SYBIL [OC]: I am as real as those bones on which you lie.  
DOCTOR: Yes, thank you for reminding me of that. Hold on a minute. What's this? Leather, paper. A book, or at least part of one. Embossed letters on the spine. W, double O, D. It must be the remains of Rookwood. Appropriate resting place for a tale of curses and tombs and revenge from beyond the grave. Now, that gives

me an idea. (loud) Listen to me, Lady Sybil.

DOCTOR [OC]: You're making a big mistake. You're - oh - ah! Oh, no, no. No, what was that? No! Help me! The bones are moving, grasping me to them in an embrace of death!

SYBIL: Oh! Sister? Sister? Is it you?

DOCTOR [OC]: No! No, it is not I who defile your tomb, it is your sister. She's trapped me in here. Your curse must be laid upon her!

SYBIL: Sister, no!

DOCTOR [OC]: Yes, and I will curse her too, with my - oh, oh, oh, oh! - dying - oh! - breath!

SYBIL: No!

(Lid opens.)

SYBIL: Sister?

DOCTOR: Only me, I'm afraid.

SYBIL: No! You shall not escape. See, this dagger, still wet with the maid's blood?

DOCTOR: No! No, you don't want to do this.

SYBIL: I'm already a murderess twice over. Why should I shrink from a third time?

(Door opens.)

JOHN: Doctor?

DOCTOR: Ah! No! Ah!

JOHN: I have the pistols. The dawn has arrived, and with it the horses.

DOCTOR: What, dawn already?

SYBIL: Aaah!

DOCTOR: Oh, oh!

JOHN: Oh, Sybil. No, stop!

DOCTOR: John, don't shoot, you'll...!

(Shot fired.)

DOCTOR: Ah. Hit the roof. Quick, get out.

(Sybil cries out.)

JOHN: Aunt Sybil!

DOCTOR: She's unconscious. Help me carry her out, quickly, before the roof comes down! Look out!

CHARLOTTE: Oh, such riches, Dick. A tiara? How do I look?

TURPIN: Like a princess. Save for the pistols at your side.

CHARLOTTE: I'd wear pistols even if I was a princess. Expect me to curtsy, eh, Lord High Muck-a-Muck? Take that? Pow-pow.

TURPIN: Your little finger there's missing a ring. Here, try this one.

CHARLOTTE: Is that a ruby? Oh yeah, that fits fine. Hey, what's that, that chain?

TURPIN: That? Oh, it's just some trinket I picked up along the way.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, I like it. Put it round my neck, Dick.

TURPIN: There. Now, the sun's coming up, your Highness. Time for royals and robbers to take to their beds.

CHARLOTTE: Not likely. Don't you know what's going on today? There's a wedding at Doomwood Manor, and all the swells will be riding up that road, laden with jewels and weighed down by gifts.

TURPIN: Oh. Reckon they'd welcome some of that burden being taken off 'em, then.

CHARLOTTE: My thinking exactly.

DOCTOR: Right, lay her out on the grass, John.

JOHN: Is she dead?

DOCTOR: No, no, just a glancing blow. She'll be all right. And perhaps she'll be herself again when she comes to.

(Rumble.)

DOCTOR: Oh.

JOHN: The whole roof has fallen in. Oh, my poor mother's bones. What have I done?

DOCTOR: And you've blocked off access to my Tardis, for a start. No data banks. Well, I'll have to see what I can glean from the charred pages of Rookwood instead.

JOHN: Oh, unhappy day that was to have seen me wed to Eleanor.

ELEANOR: How close are we now, Coachman?

COACHMAN: The Manor is only a few miles away, Miss Eleanor.

ELEANOR: Oh, John. How I long to see you this day.

COACHMAN: What the devil...?

(Shot fired. Horse neighs.)

COACHMAN: Whoa there!

TURPIN: Stand and deliver.

CHARLOTTE: Your money... (shot fired) or your life.  
TURPIN: You - put your hands where I can see 'em.  
COACHMAN: Oh, no, no, no, don't shoot, please.  
CHARLOTTE: There'll be no more shootin' - unless you give us a reason. Gonna give us a reason?  
COACHMAN: No! No, no, I promise, no.  
CHARLOTTE: Good boy.  
TURPIN: Our apologies for the intrusion, Lady. We will not delay you for long.  
ELEANOR: Oh, are you Mister Turpin?  
TURPIN: At your service. Allow me to introduce my associate, Gypsy Charlotte.  
CHARLOTTE: The pleasure is all mine. And who are you then, dearie?  
ELEANOR: My name is Eleanor Trelawney.  
CHARLOTTE: Eleanor Trelawney? Hey, Dick?  
TURPIN: Hmm?  
CHARLOTTE: It's only the bride herself.  
TURPIN: Ho, ho! A rich prize indeed.  
ELEANOR: See, she clutches her wedding bouquet in her hand.  
TURPIN: Oh, don't worry, lady. We'll let you keep that, at least.  
ELEANOR: Oh please, let me go. My betrothed awaits me.  
TURPIN: Life deals uneven hands. Some will sit down to wedding feasts, and some will starve, Gypsy Charlotte.  
CHARLOTTE: Aye, Dick. And some will dress their hair and hands and neck in wedding jewels while others have only rags.  
TURPIN: Aye. If only Man could re-deal those hands, change a deuce for an Ace.  
CHARLOTTE: Give the wedding jewels to the ragged man, then everyone'd be happy. The fine lady knowing she done good, with a betrothed and a feast still ahead of her.  
TURPIN: And the poor ragged man with those jewels to buy him clothes and bread.  
ELEANOR: Here, take the jewels. Take them.  
TURPIN: Very much obliged to you. Ah. The purse too.  
ELEANOR: Here. Is that all?  
TURPIN: That's... sufficient. Ho, Bess!  
CHARLOTTE: Farewell , lady, and thank you kindly.  
COACHMAN: Are you all right, Miss?  
ELEANOR: Oh, just,- just drive on. Drive on now.

DOCTOR: Within a sepulchral vault...Oh, blast these pages, they're too charred. It is your mother's corpse, wedding ring... Oh, what's this? Fatal branch? Doom wood.  
JOHN: What is that book? Charlotte was carrying it earlier.  
DOCTOR: I fear that may be the cause of her current problems. Listen to this. For when a bough is found, I trow, beneath its shade to lie, ere suns shall rise, - something, something, something - sure shall die.  
JOHN: But those are the words of the Doomwood curse.  
DOCTOR: No. Those are the words of the Rookwood curse. A fictional verse invented by a writer nearly a hundred years from now. No wonder Charlotte recognised it. She'd just been reading this book.  
JOHN: You speak nonsense, Doctor. Even if I were to assume that what you say is true, there is a simple explanation. This writer of whom you speak has heard of our curse and based his tale upon it. Even the name Rookwood is clearly taken from our own.  
DOCTOR: I wish it were that simple. Perhaps, when Charlotte said...  
CHARLOTTE [memory]: Oh dear. We'd better go. To Rookwood.  
DOCTOR: The Tardis thought she said:  
CHARLOTTE [memory]: Oh dear. We'd better go to Rookwood.  
DOCTOR: And landed us within the very pages of the book itself. Oh. It's imperative that I find Charlotte, now. John, point me in the direction of those horses.  
JOHN: I'm coming with you.  
DOCTOR: Won't your wedding guests be arriving soon?  
JOHN: A fig for my wedding guests, and a fig for my wedding. I must save my sister.

TURPIN: (laughs) A fine haul, and the sun not yet high in the sky. You bring me luck, Gypsy Charlotte.  
CHARLOTTE: (laughs) I bring luck to all I meet. Yet I cannot claim 'tis all good luck.  
TURPIN: (laughs) That it's not. Now, I have a thirst on me. What say you?  
CHARLOTTE: I say a thirst needs ale, Dick.  
TURPIN: And I say the same. Ho, Bess, ho!

DOCTOR: Hello? Hello there?  
JOHN: Hey, there. Stop.

COACHMAN: Whoa, boy.  
DOCTOR: Excuse me.  
ELEANOR: I have no more jewels. You'll have to take my life, for I have nothing else to give you.  
DOCTOR: I'm sorry, I think you must be labouring under a misapprehension. I just wanted to ask if you'd seen a friend of mine.  
ELEANOR: Oh. Oh, I see. I'm sorry. My nerves. I have had rather a trying experience.  
DOCTOR: Ah. I've had one or two myself. (dismounts)  
ELEANOR: But wait. John? Is that you?  
JOHN: Eleanor.  
ELEANOR: Oh, my love! How I have longed to see you. And how I wish you had found me sooner.  
JOHN: Er, yes.  
DOCTOR: I infer that you have had an unpleasant encounter. A highwayman, perhaps?  
ELEANOR: Indeed, sir.  
DOCTOR: I might even guess his name. Dick Turpin?  
ELEANOR: A strange encounter it was. I had heard tell that Turpin was a murderous rogue, but he did not seem so to me. They took jewels and coins, nothing more.  
DOCTOR: You, you mean that you think of Turpin as a vicious criminal? But that's, that's reality.  
ELEANOR: So I thought, but it was not the case.  
JOHN: Eleanor, you said they.  
ELEANOR: Imagine my surprise to find that Turpin rides with a girl, a fellow outlaw. Gypsy Charlotte is the name he gave her.  
DOCTOR: What?  
JOHN: No.  
ELEANOR: Fair of hair and of face, a little taller than myself, and her clothes are marked strange, being a kind of long britches.  
JOHN: It is her. Doctor.  
DOCTOR: But this makes no sense. Why would Charlotte be with Dick Turpin?  
JOHN: But Doctor, what do you mean? All the country knows of my family's shame. The long-lost daughter of the Doomwoods became entwined with the rogue Turpin when the gypsy clan harboured him.  
ELEANOR: What? John, what are you talking about? And who are the Doomwoods?  
JOHN: You deny knowledge of us? Well, you need not fear. You'll never be one of the Doomwood clan. Our betrothal is at an end.  
ELEANOR: John? I don't understand. Why are you behaving like this?  
JOHN: Keep away from me!  
ELEANOR: (cries) Very well. If that is what you wish. Here, take your betrothal ring. And my bouquet too. Its sweet scent now cloyes in my nostrils. Betrayer. False heart. Rogue!  
DOCTOR: Eleanor, please calm down. Somehow you're still connected to reality, which means we're not inside the book. So...  
(John cries.)  
DOCTOR: John?  
ELEANOR: What ails him?  
JOHN: My father. My father is dead.  
ELEANOR: What? Is this true? Sir Ralph dead? That, then, explains why my love is not himself.  
DOCTOR: No it doesn't.  
JOHN: How did I not feel this pain before?  
ELEANOR: Oh John, my John.  
JOHN: Eleanor, my darling. Oh, Eleanor.  
DOCTOR: Something has brought you to your senses, but what? Ah. Eureka! Eleanor, what's in your bouquet?  
ELEANOR: Daisies, cornflowers, sprigs of rosemary in remembrance of my dear father.  
DOCTOR: That's it. I thought your bouquet had a distinct... well, bouquet. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. But perhaps it's for memory too. Reality is still there underneath this gothic patina. It just needs to be brought out somehow. The fact is, I still need to work out why this is all happening. Ah! The fact. That's it, of course!  
JOHN: Doctor?  
DOCTOR: Fact, fact, fact. This is the work of the Grel.  
ELEANOR: The Grel?  
DOCTOR: Yes, squid-faced creatures we met in the Archive of Alexandria Four.  
GREL 2 [memory]: Fact, we will destroy all bad facts. Fact. Only good facts will remain.  
GRELS [memory]: Good facts! Best facts...!  
DOCTOR: The Grel didn't want to destroy the books. They planned to turn fiction into reality. It's the kind of warped idea that would make sense to a totally literal-minded species. A book cannot record facts that do not exist, therefore the recorded facts would have to be made to exist.

ELEANOR: Do those words make any sense?

DOCTOR: Charlotte broke their machine.

CHARLOTTE [memory]: Hai-ya!

GREL 5 [memory]: She has hit the machine with a book.

GREL 1 [memory]: Worse fact. The machine has exploded.

DOCTOR: Whatever was in it - nanites, particles, an alien virus perhaps - got to work on the remains of that book, working with whatever material was to hand, such as Charlotte. And these particles have themselves brought here, to the home of the only real character in Rookwood. Dick Turpin.

ELEANOR: The highwayman ?

DOCTOR: Yes. And to people they could mould easily, at least through their name, Rookwood.

ELEANOR: Broomwood.

JOHN: Doomwood.

DOCTOR: They're doing their best to fit the fragments together coherently, but really. Look at Charlotte - true love, long-lost sister, cursed maiden, highwayman's moll. They've turned her into a... huh... a plot device. Whatever they need to string a story together. Oh If only the book were readable.

ELEANOR: You do not know what is in it?

DOCTOR: Only one or two points Charlotte mentioned.

CHARLOTTE [memory]: Oh, Doctor, but it's thrilling. Curses and tombs, revenge from beyond the grave, scheming gypsies and highwaymen, of course. Dashing, romantic highwaymen... Luke had just opened the box given to him by Dick Turpin, containing a poisoned lock of his dead bride Sybil's hair... You mean Turpin didn't really do all those things? That thrilling ride to York after he'd accidentally shot his partner dead?

DOCTOR: Oh no.

ELEANOR: What is it, Doctor?

DOCTOR: I know how the Doomwood Curse will manifest itself. In Rookwood, Dick Turpin kills his partner. And in this world, that partner is Charlotte Pollard.

### [Part Three]

ELEANOR: Doctor, if the book is the cause of all our woes, why not destroy it?

DOCTOR: We're too late for that. Like shutting the stable door after the water's flowed under the bridge. The particles are already out there. And they've spread. They're affecting people who've never even been near the book. The priest, Turpin himself.

JOHN: But both have met Charlotte.

DOCTOR: Yes, I fear she's the carrier now.

ELEANOR: Well, take courage, Doctor. John and I were possessed by the book's malevolence, and we escaped unharmed. I feel sure that Charlotte will be safe.

DOCTOR: Safe? Oh, ho. She's very far from safe. For a start, she's in a world where curses are real, and for another thing, she's with a highwayman.

ELEANOR: We must find her, then, and quickly.

JOHN: We have horses. We know they ride in this area.

DOCTOR: Yes, but I think we may have more chance of success if we let the mountain come to us instead. Miss Trelawney, is there room in that coach for two more? Two rich-looking fellows with many a stealable trinket?

ELEANOR: Why, Doctor, I believe there is.

TURPIN: Hey! Another glass of grog here!

CHARLOTTE: Aye, and a toast, Dick, to the best day's haul a scamp'sman ever had.

TURPIN: Aye!

CHARLOTTE: Oh, I could wish for no better way to spend my last day on Earth, and no better man to spend it with.

TURPIN: What's that you say, Gypsy Charlotte? You think the gallows awaits you, then?

CHARLOTTE: Hah. Think you a hempen cravat would suit my neck better than your golden trinkets?

TURPIN: The likes of us was born to hang.

CHARLOTTE: Not me. My gypsy mother read my fate in the stars, the old witch. I'll die by the hand of my best friend, just as we're reunited. And that's you, Dick, and that's mine.

TURPIN: What? No.

CHARLOTTE: 'Tis as well you weren't told the same. How Black Bess would bring your end I cannot guess.

TURPIN: Aye, true. That mare is a more steadfast friend than any man. A guinea to a goat she can outrun the Devil himself were he after me.

CHARLOTTE: A toast. A toast to Black Bess.

TURPIN: Aye. More grog, for I wish to drink a toast to brave Black Bess, God bless her. ♪ Let the lover his mistress's beauty rehearse, and laud her attractions in languishing verse. Be it mine in rude strains but with truth to express, the love that I bear to my bonny Black Bess. Look, look how that eyeball glows bright as a

brand! That neck proudly arches, those nostrils expand. Mark that wide flowing mane of which each silky tress, might adorn prouder beauties though none like Black Bess. By moonlight in darkness by night or by day, her headlong career there is nothing can stay. She cares not for distance, she knows not distress. Can you show me a courser to match with Black Bess? 🎵

(Laughter and cheers.)

CHARLOTTE: Oh, that's a fine tribute, Dick Turpin.

TURPIN: So it is. Now, where's that grog?

ELEANOR: Truly, John, this was not how I thought to spend my wedding day.

JOHN: Indeed, my love. Evening approaches, Doctor, and we still have not been robbed.

DOCTOR: Would you say we'd been travelling in this coach for almost an entire day?

JOHN: Well, I admit the hours seem to have flown by with surprising haste.

DOCTOR: I noticed this last night. Despite our having our own minds, still we seem subject to some of the fictional laws. Perhaps because they're affecting our quarry, Turpin and Charlotte. Or even our trusty tight-lipped coachman. Something's trying to get us to the next set-piece as quickly as possible.

JOHN: I think I see. I feel no hunger or thirst, although no food or drink has passed my lips this day.

ELEANOR: And I too. I intended to ask you a question, Doctor, yet have not found time in these last ten hours or so.

DOCTOR: Yes. Worrying, isn't it? What question, by the way?

ELEANOR: Oh. I wish you to explain how my bridal bouquet has enabled us to keep our senses.

DOCTOR: Hmm. Well, my guess is this. The Grel might be happy to release these fiction-enabling viral particles into the universe, but they would not want to risk having their own minds affected. As with the squid they facially resemble, Grel have no noses as such, but breathe instead through gills.

ELEANOR: Like fish?

DOCTOR: Hmm, that sort of thing. These gills filter out airborne pollutants, but we have no such filters, and so the particles are being breathed in and head straight for the brain. However, I believe the rosemary is serving a dual purpose. Its strong scent is masking the particles...

JOHN: As perfume on a corpse hides the smell of decay.

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, like that. And its memory-enhancing properties are stimulating the mind, enabling it to retain its true identity.

ELEANOR: But not you, Doctor. I note you have not surrendered to fiction despite your contact with these particles.

DOCTOR: Ah. Well, that'll be down to my Time Lord phagocytes, I expect.

JOHN: Time Lord phag...?

DOCTOR: Later, later.

ELEANOR: I see. So without the rosemary, we two would think ourselves characters in the romance.

JOHN: Not think ourselves. We would *be* so. I know of what I speak. And how I wish I could regain that state of blessed ignorance. Oh, save me from this pain. Well I understand now why our miserable towns are drowned in mind-numbing gin.

ELEANOR: Oh John, my darling.

JOHN: I have tried to bury myself in this quest, but my father is dead and I cannot bear the sorrow any more. Give me that. Away, Devil herb.

ELEANOR: John, no!

JOHN: Let me know peace again.

DOCTOR: No! Coachman. stop!

COACHMAN: Whoa, boy.

DOCTOR: Eleanor, go back and find the bouquet, would you?

ELEANOR: Yes, Doctor.

(Coach door opens.)

DOCTOR: John, listen to me. This is very, very unfair. The fiction has not only taken your father from you, its distortion of time and reality is interfering with the grieving process, making each realisation more painful than the last.

JOHN: The pain cannot get worse than this.

(Owl hoots.)

DOCTOR: I hope that's true. But, for your own sake as well as for our quest, you mustn't choose to return to ignorance, however hard this is to live through. That world you were in before, it was a world of words. And words on a page, however skilfully written, can never convey the realities of losing a loved one.

JOHN: You have no need to tell me that.

DOCTOR: I know, but listen to me, neither can mere words fully convey joy or love or hope. If you choose to live in a world where your grief is unreal, then you can never again experience true happiness.

JOHN: Happiness? I cannot comprehend there is such a thing in the world.

DOCTOR: I know. But there will be again one day. Think of Eleanor. Think of how close you came to losing her, when you were ruled by the fiction.

ELEANOR: I have the bouquet.  
DOCTOR: And one day soon it will symbolise your marriage. Yes, John?  
JOHN: Yes, Doctor.  
ELEANOR: Oh, John.  
JOHN: And now we must continue, to find Charlotte.  
COACHMAN: Walk on.  
DOCTOR: Thank you. I brought this curse here, and I must deal with it before more lives are lost. If only I knew how to find Charlotte. Oh, if only I'd read that book.  
JOHN: Do you still have the fragments with you?  
DOCTOR: Oh yes, for what they're worth. Which is basically nothing. There, this would be about the place. There. A few words of what seems to be an ode to Black Bess.  
JOHN: Hmm.  
DOCTOR: Er... danger?  
JOHN: Struggle?  
ELEANOR: Let me see. Slip? No, flip him, Dick?  
DOCTOR: I don't even know what that means. And... then we seem to be in the ride to York. Back a bit... What's that?  
ELEANOR: It looks like Falstaff.  
DOCTOR: Falstaff? What's a character from Shakespeare doing in a Gothic romance?  
ELEANOR: I could not say. Seems most odd. But perhaps to those in the romance, his presence would be clear as day.  
DOCTOR: Yes, of course! So... Coachman?  
COACHMAN: Whoa, boy. Yeah, sir?  
DOCTOR: If I were to say to you Falstaff, what would you understand by it?  
COACHMAN: Falstaff? What, you mean, the Falstaff Inn in Kilburn, sir, where Dick Turpin may often be found with Gypsy Charlotte at his side?  
DOCTOR: Ah, it's as easy as that. Drive to the Falstaff Inn, then, at all speed.  
COACHMAN: Yah!

TURPIN: Molly! More grog here. More!  
MOLLY: I'm a-fetching it, Mister Turpin, sir. You just stay right where you are, Mister Turpin, sir.  
TURPIN: And don't you be watering it, neither.  
MOLLY: Never, sir. I run an honest house.  
CHARLOTTE: Honest, the Falstaff? That'll be the day. Why is she so nervous all of a sudden. I don't like it, Dick. Something's not right.  
TURPIN: Yeah, I agree. Wench's manner is mighty strange.  
CHARLOTTE: She's waiting for trouble. I thought I heard a carriage draw up just now. There may be danger.  
TURPIN: King's men, you think? Right, let's be gone.

DOCTOR: Well, John?  
JOHN: They're in there all right.  
ELEANOR: Then let us hasten to rescue Charlotte from that rogue.  
DOCTOR: Not so fast, Eleanor. Remember she's Gypsy Charlotte, armed and dangerous. We don't want a gun battle in the middle of a crowded inn.  
JOHN: Well then, what should we do?  
DOCTOR: Well, they won't leave without their horses. Let's go round to the stable block and wait for them there.  
JOHN: Very well. Eleanor? You must wait here in the carriage. The coachman will protect you.  
ELEANOR: I would rather come with you.  
JOHN: Please, Eleanor.  
ELEANOR: (sighs) Very well.  
DOCTOR: Come on, John.

TURPIN: Here, Bess. I'm ready for flight, my love. Hurry, wench.  
CHARLOTTE: I am hurrying. It ain't my fault this horse is no Bess. Hold still, creature. I'm taken because of you.  
JOHN: There. Doctor, it's them.  
DOCTOR: Quietly now.  
JOHN: They'll get away those, those... Those foul villains who robbed my beloved. Have at you!  
DOCTOR: John, no, come back!  
TURPIN: What the Devil?  
JOHN: Gotcha!  
CHARLOTTE: Let me go!

JOHN: I have her, Doctor.  
CHARLOTTE: Flip him, Dick! Fire and take him!  
DOCTOR: This must be how it happens. No, no, stop!  
JOHN: Come, man. Help me arrest the felons.  
CHARLOTTE: Fire, damn you. Why don't you fire?  
TURPIN: I can't, I shall hit you if I do.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh, take your chance.  
ELEANOR: John, Doctor? You forgot the rosemary.  
DOCTOR: Eleanor, stay back, this is how Turpin shoots.... (voice changes) Turpin shoots.  
ELEANOR: Doctor?  
DOCTOR: Mister Turpin, sir, I beg you, don't shoot my ward, by all that is holy.  
ELEANOR: Doctor, the bouquet. Catch.  
DOCTOR: What is this garland?  
CHARLOTTE: Oh, damn you, Dick, fire!  
(Shot fired. The Doctor cries out.)  
ELEANOR: Doctor!  
JOHN: You've killed him. No!  
CHARLOTTE: Yes. Now, get off me!  
TURPIN: Quick, Charlotte. Here. Bess can carry the two of us.  
CHARLOTTE: I'm with you, Dick. Now, away. Away to the hills.  
ELEANOR: Murder at the Falstaff Inn! Should I fetch the sheriff's men, Master Doomwood?  
JOHN: No, good lady. Bring me a horse. We shall make chase ourselves. I shall never rest till I have apprehended the killers of that good man, the Doctor. Dick Turpin and Gypsy Charlotte shall hang from the Tyburn Tree. Who's with me?  
MEN: Aye.  
JOHN: Then to horse and follow me!  
ELEANOR: John, wait. John, come back.  
MOLLY: Oh, let him go, Miss. Young Mister Doomwood and his pack of men'll catch Turpin. Aye, and that girl he's bonded to. Don't you want your friend avenged?  
ELEANOR: The Doctor. Oh, let me through, let me see him.  
MOLLY: No, Miss. There's nothing you can do for him. He's dead all right.  
DOCTOR: (normal) I hate to contradict you...  
ELEANOR: Doctor!  
MOLLY: Well, I never!  
ELEANOR: But it struck you full in the chest.  
DOCTOR: Yes. That's the strange thing. By rights I should have died, or regenerated, but I didn't. I felt myself die and then I... just awoke.  
ELEANOR: How can that be?  
DOCTOR: I'm not sure, yet. Where is Charlotte?  
ELEANOR: Gone. And Turpin too, with John in full pursuit.  
MOLLY: And they'll string 'em up too when they catch 'em.  
DOCTOR: Quickly, then. I've got to get after them.  
ELEANOR: The carriage is round the front.  
DOCTOR: No, no, too slow. Bring me a horse, Mistress...?  
MOLLY: Molly, sir.  
DOCTOR: Mistress Molly. The finest horse you have.  
MOLLY: Er, yes, sir. You boy. The grey is fresh. Bring it here.  
BOY: Yes, Ma'am.  
ELEANOR: And also one for me.  
MOLLY: And the roan for the lady.  
DOCTOR: I don't... Oh, who am I to argue?  
MOLLY: Here they come, sir.  
DOCTOR: Thank you. Now, I'm not taking it slowly so you can ride daintily side-saddle.  
ELEANOR: Well, everyone here is within a world of fiction. They will never believe a real lady would ride off with her stockings showing. Come on then, Doctor, what are we waiting for?  
DOCTOR: Giddy-up, Grey Girt!  
ELEANOR: I beg your pardon?  
DOCTOR: Oh, the horse. I was talking to the horse. Yah! Yah!  
ELEANOR: Yah!

CHARLOTTE: They're still at our heels, Dick.  
TURPIN: Let 'em stay there for now. Shame to give up the game so early.  
CHARLOTTE: A fine game if it ends in the gallows.

TURPIN: Aye, it might. I ain't gonna die old in me bed, that's for sure, but till then, I'll have my sport. Look ahead. See there.

CHARLOTTE: The toll-gate. We'll be trapped.

TURPIN: Have faith in Bess, wench. She'll see us right.

CHARLOTTE: She'll never clear it, not with two, you're mad.

MAN: We have you now.

TURPIN: Draw your pistols. If the Turnpike Man tries to bar our way, you'll send him on his.

TOLL-KEEPER: Oi, you! Stand where you are!

TURPIN: Not today, Turnpike. Go, Bess, go!

TOLL-KEEPER: Oi!

CHARLOTTE: Oh-ho! We did it!

TOLL-KEEPER: Scoundrels. Madmen. You'll pay the Devil, both of you.

JOHN: Open the gates, damn you.

TOLL-KEEPER: Not till I've got my dues.

JOHN: I'll give you what you're due, man. Can't you see that's a highwayman there?

TOLL-KEEPER: Aye, and he done me once. Strike me if I let you do me a second time. You pays your fee or you can turn back. It's of no matter to me.

JOHN: Oh, blast you, fellow. Here's your coin. Now, the gate and be quick. They'll be miles off by now.

ELEANOR: Doctor, I fear the horses cannot keep up this pace.

DOCTOR: But we must catch up with Charlotte before the sun rises. The curse is still upon her. We have to bring her back to reality.

ELEANOR: Because then she shall not be subject to the curse and will not die?

DOCTOR: Yes. Ah! Ah, whoa, whoa, whoa.

ELEANOR: What is it?

DOCTOR: Easy, easy, easy.

ELEANOR: What is it?

DOCTOR: Let me think, Eleanor, let me think. Yes. Yes! That must be it.

ELEANOR: But what?

DOCTOR: The solution to my cheating death back in the stable. I had become infected, I was an inhabitant of melodrama, a fictional character. And within that realm, there was no question but that Turpin's bullet would hit me, and I would die.

ELEANOR: But the rosemary. You caught the bouquet.

DOCTOR: Indeed. At the exact moment the bullet struck, I started to become myself again. The laws of fiction no longer applied, and the probability of that stray bullet hitting me was no more than, oh, a hundred to one. If it had been a second later... Eleanor, you saved my life.

ELEANOR: Oh, then I am very glad.

DOCTOR: What worries me is how fast the infection took hold. I was totally unable to fight it. So much for my Time Lord phagocytes. The particles must be growing, multiplying around Charlotte. If only we could cure her, perhaps we could stop the spread. Oh, we've lingered long enough. Rested, Girt, old girl, hmm? Come on then, let's be on our way!

ELEANOR: Onward! On!

CHARLOTTE: No sign of 'em, Dick. We've shaken 'em off good.

TURPIN: Not for long, not with the scent of blood in their nostrils. Now, where would be the sport in ending the chase so soon? You know where we're heading for, Charlotte, my gypsy jenny?

CHARLOTTE: Well, this is the Tottenham Road. I know it well.

TURPIN: Aye, but we're going a sight further than that. Ah, do you see that wagoner coming our way? If he carries along this road, he'll meet with those that come after.

CHARLOTTE: Leave it to me, Dick. One shot through the heart'll stop his tongue.

TURPIN: No, no. Don't waste a precious pistol-load, I have other plans. Hey there, Wagoner .

WAGONER: I hear you.

TURPIN: I have a task for you. Tell my friends behind, they will next hear of Dick Turpin at York.

CHARLOTTE: At York? Why, that's impossible.

TURPIN: No. Black Bess doesn't go by impossible. It's almost a pity to keep them far enough behind that they can't see her fly. In times to come when town-folk and country-folk alike tell of this ride, let them speak that the hero of this tale is not bold Dick Turpin. No, nor bonny Charlotte either. The greatest heroine of them all is brave Black Bess.

ELEANOR: Miles on, and there is still no sign, Doctor. We may not even be following in their tracks.

DOCTOR: Oh yes we are, Eleanor. I know where Turpin is headed, even if he doesn't know it yet himself. To York.

ELEANOR: Oh, but he'll never make it.

DOCTOR: He will, it's in the book! The bit that everyone knows, even those of us who haven't read it. He rides all night and finally reaches York, gallant Black Bess dropping dead just as the clock strikes six in the morning.

ELEANOR: But Charlotte...

DOCTOR: Is cursed to die before the next sunrise. This time of year, I'd put that at oh, about 6:30 am. We have to get to her before then.

ELEANOR: Yes, but I cannot see how we can catch them.

DOCTOR: Look. There's a turnpike up ahead. We can ask there. Make sure we're on the right path at least.

DOCTOR: Whoa, there. Whoa, easy. Ho there, Toll-Keeper.

ELEANOR: We wish to pass.

TOLL-KEEPER: It's a crown to pass. Cor blimey. That young lady's flashing her ankles.

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, she is. Very observant. Now...

TOLL-KEEPER: Oh, it puts me in mind of a girl I once knew, she does.

DOCTOR: Ah.

TOLL-KEEPER: Now, there was a beauty who didn't mind half the country seeing her as God made her, if you get my meaning.

DOCTOR: I believe I do, yes. Now, have you seen a black horse with two riders go through here?

TOLL-KEEPER: Go through here, I have not seen.

ELEANOR: Oh no! Then we've lost them.

TOLL-KEEPER: Go over here, I have, sir, some little while ago.

DOCTOR: How little a while?

TOLL-KEEPER: Oh, not yet an hour, I'd say.

DOCTOR: They can't have got so far ahead of us. Oh wait, what am I saying? This is Dick Turpin on Black Bess in all their fictional glory. That horse can do anything.

TOLL-KEEPER: You're right there, sir. That jump she made, I would not have believed it possible had it not been my own eyes doing the seeing, like I'm seeing you and the young lady now. Oh, she does put me in mind of that girl I once knew. Not a girl now by no means, that's for sure, but then I'm no lad neither. But she was never but beautiful, despite her age, whatever her fortunes and misfortunes.

DOCTOR: I'm sure. Come on, Eleanor, we'd better be off.

ELEANOR: Wait. Doctor, this stirrup has ensnared my petticoat.

TOLL-KEEPER: Born in Newgate, and during her life continued variety for threescore years. Besides her childhood was twelve year a... (horse whinny) Five times a wife, whereof once to her own Brother, twelve year a thief, eight year a transported felon in Virginia, at last...

DOCTOR + TOLL-KEEPER:... Grew rich, lived honest and died a penitent .

TOLL-KEEPER: Why, you knew her too?

DOCTOR: Oh yes. I think I did, once. For about 427 pages.

TURPIN: Ha-ha! I know the town ahead. And the man who has the hostelry yonder. Time for a visit, I feel.

CHARLOTTE: Dick, you're surely not thinking to hide awhile?

TURPIN: Hide? What tale would they tell then? He shot a man, he flew, he hid. No Charlotte. We ride to our destiny this night, Bess and I. I may come still to dance to the music of the four winds, my beautiful Bess may yet be borne away to the knackers yard, but if we reach York by morning, then we shall never die, not while stories live in men's hearts.

CHARLOTTE: Then ride on.

TURPIN: No, no, no. This last stop first. With a bath of brandy and her bit wrapped in bloody beef steak, Bess'll go as long as there's breath in her body.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, she wants to be off even now.

TURPIN: Oh, you shall fly again, my love, you shall fly. Tonight, we ride to immortality, you and I.

ELEANOR: Doctor, your face, it's so grave. You have not spoken since we left that turnpike behind us.

DOCTOR: I've been thinking, Eleanor, that's all. But I'm hoping very hard that my thoughts are wrong.

ELEANOR: Tell me, then. Share your burden.

DOCTOR: Have you heard of a novel called Moll Flanders?

ELEANOR: Oh, yes. It is by Mister Defoe, but I have not read it.

DOCTOR: I have. And the Tollgate Keeper back there spoke the very words which are used in the novel to summarise the life of the eponymous anti-heroine.

ELEANOR: A coincidence, though. He did not speak her name.

DOCTOR: Oh, the name would have meant nothing. Moll was an assumed name even in the fiction. Unless the man was deliberately recalling the book, I cannot see...

CRONE: Stop, stop!

DOCTOR: Whoa. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold there, Girt. Hold there, Girt.

CRONE: Oh, thank you for stopping. I am desperate for intelligent conversation.

DOCTOR: Oh - well, I'm flattered, of course, but unfortunately...

CRONE: I was not addressing you, Yahoo.

DOCTOR: I beg your pardon?

CRONE: I was speakin' to this noble Houyhnhnm (pronounced whinim) that you have so vilely enslaved.

DOCTOR: Oh dear. Well, I'm sorry, but the noble Houyhnhnm has urgent business elsewhere. Come on, Girt. Come on, Eleanor.

CRONE: Hey! Hey, come back! Come back, I say!

ELEANOR: Was that woman mad?

DOCTOR: No, but my worst fears are being realised. She believed she was in a world akin to that travelled by Lemuel Gulliver. This isn't just a local affair any more. The particles are spreading, infecting wherever they find volumes of narrative. Don't you see what this means?

ELEANOR: I fear not.

DOCTOR: Well, this is the early 18th century, the birthplace of the novel. The time of Jonathan Swift, Daniel Defoe - literary giants. The years when fiction begins to take over the world. Every home will soon possess a novel. And now, it seems, be possessed by a novel. If we can't stop it, very soon, the whole world will become fictional.

#### [Part Four]

CHARLOTTE: You're only inches from my face, yet I can scarce see you, Dick. Oh, will this night never end? We ain't riding to York, we're riding to Hell.

TURPIN: Stay your tongue, Charlotte. The fog'll pass soon. Or rather, Bess will ride us out of it.

CHARLOTTE: Already she stumbles. She won't long outrun the mob, let alone the Devil.

TURPIN: Then hold your tongue. Ensure I don't send you to see Old Nick alone and lighten her load.

CHARLOTTE: And make my gypsy mother's words come true, that I would die at the hands of my best friend?

TURPIN: No, no. I wouldn't do that. It's the fear in me speaking. I hear the sound of hooves and think the man I killed is riding up behind.

CHARLOTTE: Quiet your dark fancies or I'll see him too. We need to rest. A tot of brandy by the fire'd help us all.

TURPIN: Aye, if Bess stops, she'll fall. If she falls she won't be riding again this side of Doomsday. I must push her on, or we're lost.

CRONE: Stay!

TURPIN: Bess. Bess. My black beauty.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, the ghost is here.

TURPIN: No, no. 'Twas a woman's voice. What phantom is that?

CRONE: No phantom, though I may be soon.

CHARLOTTE: Dick, don't shoot. I know that voice.

CRONE: Ah. As well you should, my girl. (laughs)

CHARLOTTE: Mother?

ELEANOR: Doctor, can we continue?

DOCTOR: Ah, just let the horses drink their fill first.

ELEANOR: The world is turning fictional every moment we delay.

DOCTOR: I know, but Grey Girt is still real, and I can't just pluck a happy ending out of thin air. Or can I?

ELEANOR: What?

DOCTOR: Now what was it Charlotte said? I think...

CHARLOTTE [memory]: I think I'm going to imagine that virtue triumphs at the end, and the hero and heroine will marry at last. After all, that's how books should end.

DOCTOR: That's how books should end. The hero and heroine must marry at last.

ELEANOR: I wish then that I were the heroine, for my marriage seems indefinitely postponed.

DOCTOR: Well, if you were the heroine, we would undoubtedly catch up with Charlotte and John. The narrative would demand it.

ELEANOR: But here we languish miles behind them.

DOCTOR: The fictional rules guiding everyone else apply only peripherally to us. That's why we're not making any progress.

ELEANOR: But time passed so quickly before.

DOCTOR: That was when nothing of interest was happening to anyone involved in the story. Now Turpin and Charlotte are off having the ride of their imaginary lives, while we plod on slowly. We have no chance of catching them, in reality.

ELEANOR: I begin to comprehend your meaning. You're suggesting we surrender to the fiction, become part of it.

DOCTOR: I think it's our only way of catching them.

ELEANOR: But what if we become embroiled in a different tale?

DOCTOR: Good point . It wouldn't be much use believing ourselves trapped on a desert island as Doctor Crusoe and Girl Friday. We must make sure we frame our task in a way that ensures it's assimilated into Charlotte's story.

ELEANOR : I understand.

DOCTOR: This may be dangerous. I am asking you to relinquish your mind, your sanity, your very self. If we fail, there may be no way back.

ELEANOR: And if we do not try, will there be a place worth coming back to? Is there enough rosemary in the world to hold these romances at bay?

DOCTOR: Well, if you're sure. Thank you. Speaking of rosemary, we'll need to pack away your bouquet. We need a box. A box. Of course. That's it.

TURPIN: Oh, Bess. Poor Bess. You've killed us, Crone, sure as if you'd fired a pistol.

CRONE: Nay. You're both the other ends. The Hangman's got his eye on you, Dick. And as for Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE: I ain't forgotten what you told me of my fate, Mother. But how did you know to find us here?

CRONE: Well, the tales reached me of your ride. And other tales too.

CHARLOTTE: Other tales?

CRONE: Aye. Of a man who rides behind, carrying a most precious burden that must reach York by morning.

TURPIN: Huh! He'll not steal my thunder. It's of Bess's ride they'll sing.

CHARLOTTE: If Bess was on her pegs again, we'd steal his riches and reach York too.

TURPIN: Then all tales would be of us, it's true. But I fear our bid for glory has fallen with Bess.

CRONE: Why do you think I came 'ere? To see you fail? No. See this flagon? It contains a gypsy potion, to put the fire back in that filly's heart.

TURPIN: By all that's wonderful. Here, I must have it. Bess, my love, we'll beat 'em yet.

CRONE: That's the way. See? Already the light returns to her eyes.

TURPIN: And warmth seems to return to my freezing bones. We'll make it yet. Here, take my hand, girl.

CHARLOTTE: Farewell, Mother.

CRONE: I wish I could say fare thee well, my adopted daughter. But you will die before the sun rises. That I know.

ELEANOR: Uncle?

DOCTOR: Yes, m'dear?

ELEANOR: Are you certain we are on the right path?

DOCTOR: Every man and boy, Toll-keeper and shepherd, ragamuffin and didicoy of whom we've enquired has assured us this is the way to York. For it is imperative that we reach York before sunrise.

ELEANOR: That is true, it is imperative that we reach York before sunrise. But are you certain there is wisdom in telling all we meet of our purpose? It may be that rogues will hear of our precious load and try to relieve us of it.

DOCTOR: Oh, I fear no rogues. I must and will tell everyone of our undertaking. For I am proud that I was chosen by no less a person than King George himself for this mission. And as he entrusted this burden to me, he most regally informed me that it was imperative to reach York before sunrise.

ELEANOR: But you carry within that box nothing less than a crown that we...

DOCTOR: I know, nothing less than a manuscript of Handel's latest great work.

ELEANOR: A what?

DOCTOR: Well, nevertheless, nevertheless it is imperative that we reach York before sunrise.

ELEANOR: Oh yes, it is imperative that we reach York before sunrise.

TURPIN: Ah-ha hey! Farewell Robin Hood and all your thievery. Nottinghamshire's behind us and Yorkshire's precious soil beneath our feet.

CHARLOTTE: Oh Dick, there's witchcraft in my one-time mother's brew. The Bess has lived to ride us through the fog and across the border.

TURPIN: Ah, she slows, though, with each passing mile. I fear no potion will speed her up again.

CHARLOTTE: Aye. The game nears its end one way or another.

JOHN: You boy. Ho! I say, ho!

BOY: Me, sir? Sorry sir, I thought you were talking...

JOHN: Stop babbling, boy, and answer me this. Has a horse ridden through here? Black in colour, carrying two riders?

BOY: Yes, sir. Not about five minutes ago. The horse looked near dead, I'd say. If you look sharp you'll overtake them before they reach Cawood Ferry.

JOHN: Five minutes? Why, they can't be more than a quarter of a mile ahead. That fine pair will be snug in York castle before an hour is out. Onward, men! Onward!

TURPIN: Hold on, Bess. Hold on.  
CHARLOTTE: She's dying, Dick. She'll never make it.  
TURPIN: She will, and she has. See there, Charlotte - Saint Mary's spire, All Hallows Tower. 'Tis done, 'tis won. Only a few more steps, my lass, and York is ours.  
CHARLOTTE: She can go no further.  
TURPIN: York is near, I say to you. York is near. Hurrah! Oh!  
CHARLOTTE: Oh, Bess.  
TURPIN: Oh no. No.  
CHARLOTTE: She's gone.  
TURPIN: Oh... I've killed the best steed that ever was, and for what? For what?  
(Bells chime in the distance.)  
CHARLOTTE: Oh!  
TURPIN: I am answered. It was to hear those strokes.

JOHN: There they are. Ahead.  
ELEANOR: Uncle, there is York ahead.  
DOCTOR: It is imperative that we reach it before sunrise.

CHARLOTTE: Six of the clock, Dick. Already the sun's rays creep over the horizon. Soon there'll be no place for us to hide. We must fly.  
TURPIN: Never, Charlotte, never. I'll fight it out here, by Bess's side.  
JOHN: (nearby) There they are!  
CHARLOTTE: Don't give up the game now. Into this copse. We can still make it.  
TURPIN: But Bess. I cannot leave her.  
CHARLOTTE: What did Bess die for, but to save you. Now, come on.  
JOHN: Whoa! Where are they? Where are they!  
MAN: Oh, someone's coming, Master Doomwood.  
ELEANOR: John! John!  
JOHN: Who is that? Eleanor?  
ELEANOR: John, it is I, your love. And my uncle too.  
JOHN: But why are you here?  
DOCTOR: We have been charged to deliver a package to York.  
ELEANOR: It is imperative that we reach York before sunrise.  
JOHN: We ride that way. Follow us. The sun is even now preparing to make its entrance.  
DOCTOR: Oh, but what is that, that lies by the road?  
JOHN: It is the carcass of Turpin's horse.  
DOCTOR: Oh.  
ELEANOR: The highwayman?  
JOHN: Poor Black Bess. You deserved a better fate, and a better master.  
DOCTOR: What, then Turpin himself must be nearby?  
JOHN: Aye, and his gypsy wench too, that once called herself my sister. We ride to avenge the murder of the good Doctor, most noble of men.  
DOCTOR: Oh, then we will ride with you with pleasure.  
ELEANOR: Make haste. Dawn is nigh.

JOHN: This is the town square, but I see only a few traders readying themselves for the day's business. No highwayman, nor gypsy.  
DOCTOR: Perhaps those fellows breakfasting yonder will have sighted them.  
ELEANOR: They're so well-wrapped against the elements, they can scarce see their food before them, I trow.  
JOHN: Ho, you fellows. I see you engage in a substantial repast. I envy your appetites. I will have none till I see Dick Turpin in front of me.  
TURPIN: (accent) What's that you say about Dick Turpin, master?  
DOCTOR: Well, have you had sight of him?  
TURPIN: (accent) Not I.  
JOHN: What say you, young man? Have you seen aught of Turpin? Well, speak, lad.  
CHARLOTTE: No, sir.  
DOCTOR: But that's no lad. Lower your hood this instant.  
CHARLOTTE: Shan't.  
ELEANOR: Then I shall do it for you. Oh. A girl.  
JOHN: Gypsy Charlotte.  
DOCTOR: I suspected as much.  
TURPIN: And you were right, sir. See Dick Turpin stand before you. Charlotte, relieve him of that precious

box he clutches to his chest so tight.  
DOCTOR: Oh, you rogue. That box is not... Oh!  
CHARLOTTE: Hand it over, or next time I shan't be so ladylike.  
DOCTOR: You leave me no choice.  
CHARLOTTE: Uncle, we have failed. Even now the sun rises.  
TURPIN: Open the box, my love. See what we've got.  
CHARLOTTE: 'Tis locked. Hold up. 'Tis nothing but some flowers, Dick.  
JOHN: May the curse of the Doomwoods be upon you, sister.  
DOCTOR: John, no!  
(Shot fired. A scream. The sounds slow down.)

(Charlotte groans.)  
ELEANOR: (distant) Is she dead?  
JOHN: (distant) No, I missed, curse her.  
DOCTOR: (distant) The sun has risen.  
CHARLOTTE: (normal) Doctor? Doctor, is that you?  
ELEANOR: (distant) I think she is addressing you, Uncle.  
DOCTOR: (distant) Well, I cannot think why. As if I should associate with a creature like this.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh, charming. Doctor, what's happening? Oh, I feel like I've been in a dream, and then something awoke me. A scent reaching right into my brain. This bouquet!  
DOCTOR: Oh, what trick is this? That box should contain the Handel manuscript.  
CHARLOTTE: The Handel manu...? Oh. Yes, it does. Under these flowers. Here, have it back.  
DOCTOR: But - but there is nothing else in here. (coughs)  
CHARLOTTE: Better now ?  
DOCTOR: Er - oh. Oh. Hello, Charlotte. Nice to see you again.  
CHARLOTTE: Nice to be me again.  
DOCTOR: Eleanor, John, here. I need you to take a sniff of this.  
ELEANOR: Yes, Uncle.  
JOHN: But the rogue Turpin will...  
CHARLOTTE: Give me your pistol, I'll cover him.  
JOHN: Hey!  
TURPIN: What's this, wench? Would you shoot your old accomplice?  
CHARLOTTE: Try me.  
DOCTOR: Please, John. The bouquet. There.  
JOHN: Oh.  
ELEANOR: Oh. Oh.  
JOHN: It's all right, my love, I have you.  
ELEANOR: Doctor, your plan worked.  
CHARLOTTE: There. I haven't a clue what's been going on, but I knew you'd have a plan.  
DOCTOR: Actually, you sowed the seeds of your own liberation.  
CHARLOTTE: Did I? Well, good for me.  
DOCTOR: Well, what was the last thing you read in Rookwood?  
CHARLOTTE: Luke opening the box and being poisoned by...  
DOCTOR: Ah.  
CHARLOTTE: Oh!  
DOCTOR: (laughs) I had to come up with a plan that would reflect Rookwood enough for the particles to let it stand, so it had a chance of being carried out even after I surrendered my mind. All I knew were the few scraps you told me, but that one seemed to suit my purpose admirably.  
ELEANOR: We had to pray that you would take the box, and before the curse struck.  
DOCTOR: Seemed the only logical story progression. Then I just had to hope you would realise how to save me in return.  
CHARLOTTE: You trusted me enough to risk your own mind.  
DOCTOR: Well, I hardly had any choice, did I? Still, seems my faith was not misplaced.  
CHARLOTTE: Thank you, Doctor .  
ELEANOR: And now Charlotte is cured, the world too is saved.  
DOCTOR: Perhaps. I'd hoped the infection would stop spreading once Charlotte was herself again, but the fact is, we can't be sure.  
TURPIN: (deep) Fact. Bad fact.  
ELEANOR: Doctor, look.  
CHARLOTTE: Stay where you are, Turpin.  
DOCTOR: Just drop the pistol, Charlotte. It won't help us now.  
CHARLOTTE: But... Oh, all right.  
JOHN: What's happening to him?

DOCTOR: It seems he's absorbed all our particles as well as his own. Dick Turpin - the only person who's both real and fictional. He's a magnet for them. I should have realised when John and I became infected so quickly yesterday. Charley wasn't the carrier. Turpin was.

TURPIN: (deep) Good fact. Additional fact. The power surges into me. I can re-shape the world in my own image.

CHARLOTTE: And he's channelling the Grel. This can't be good.

ELEANOR: Doctor, I think he's growing.

DOCTOR: I think you're right.

TURPIN: (deep) Bow before me, people of York.

YORKSHIRE MAN : A giant. Quick, Sancho Panza, give me your sword.

WOMAN: A Brobdingnagian 'ere.

CHARLOTTE: Doctor, give him the flowers quickly. Cure him like you cured me.

DOCTOR: No. This might be a blessing in disguise.

CHARLOTTE: It's a very good disguise.

DOCTOR: Eleanor, John, find all the rosemary you can. Herb gardens, kitchens, apothecary shops. Give some to every man, woman and child you can find.

ELEANOR: Yes, Doctor.

JOHN: You heard him, men. Do as he says.

CHARLOTTE: I'll help too.

DOCTOR: No Charlotte, I need you here. Now, take the bouquet, keep it close. I need you to remember everything you can about the Dick Turpin of Rookwood, and be ready. As the particles are expelled from the townspeople. Turpin will take them in, as he did ours. We want him to contain every particle there is.

CHARLOTTE: But that'll just make him stronger.

DOCTOR: I don't think so. Remember the Grel, how they couldn't cope with the clash between fiction and reality? At this concentration, those particles are imparting a bit of Grel-ness into Turpin, as you spotted. Ha - hear that? It's working. Now, Charley - begin.

CHARLOTTE: Er - Dick Turpin was a noble highwayman, daring and chivalrous.

TURPIN: (deep) Good fact.

DOCTOR: No. Turpin was a butcher, turned petty criminal, turned violent thief.

CHARLOTTE: A friend of gypsies, a loyal companion, whose company was enjoyed by everyone but the local...

DOCTOR: A member of the feared and vicious Essex gang, a brutal robber.

TURPIN: (deep) No. Bad fact.

CHARLOTTE: There is a reward of two hundred pounds on his head, and the lawyer Coates is determined to capture him, but Turpin fears no man.

TURPIN: (deep) Good fact.

DOCTOR: Turpin goes to ground, fearing for his life.

TURPIN: (deep) Bad fact.

CHARLOTTE: Turpin and his friend Tom King are betrayed to Coates, and in the confusion Turpin shoots King dead.

TURPIN: (deep) Good... good...

DOCTOR: Turpin and his friend Matthew King are hunted down by assassins, and King is killed.

TURPIN: (deep) No, bad - bad - bad...

CHARLOTTE: Turpin rides on Black Bess to York and escapes his pursuers through his daring and cunning.

TURPIN: (deep) Good, good...

DOCTOR: Black Bess does not exist. Turpin flees to Epping Forest, where he murders, in cold blood, a man who tries to capture him.

TURPIN: (deep) Bad fact! Bad fact!

CHARLOTTE: No, Turpin is a hero till the very last page.

DOCTOR: Let me tell you how Turpin's story really ends.

DOCTOR: Dick Turpin does come to York this year, all right, but he's calling himself John Palmer. He gets into a dispute with another man over the shooting of a cockerel.

JUSTICE: John Palmer did on the second day of October with a gun kill a tame fowl which did belong to Francis Hall. And John Robinson, reprimanding the same John Palmer, says John Palmer did threaten to shoot him.

DOCTOR: Further investigations found Palmer to be suspected of stealing horses and sheep, and he's locked up in York Castle.

WITNESS 1: (female) Palmer crossed the Humber into Lincolnshire on numerous occasions, and returned with several horses, which he sold to diverse persons in the county of York. He had no settled way of living that I know of at all, yet he lived like a gentleman.

DOCTOR: He writes to his brother-in-law, asking for character witnesses to be found in his defence, but the man refuses to accept delivery of the letter. It's seen by an old acquaintance of Turpin's who recognises the

handwriting.

WITNESS 2: (female) Happening to be in the Post Office where I saw a letter directed to Turpin's brother-in-law. I thought at first I remembered the superscription, and concluded it to be the handwriting of the prisoner, Turpin, whereupon I carried the letter before a Magistrate.

DOCTOR: And the horse thief John Palmer is identified as being none other than the murderer Dick Turpin. He's tried in March 1739, when...

JUDGE: Richard Turpin, as your country has found you guilty of a crime worthy of death, it is my office to pronounce sentence against you.

DOCTOR: The following month, he is hanged at the gallows at Knavesmire.

TURPIN: I'll see you in Hell.

(Crowd laughs.)

TURPIN: (deep) No. Bad fact. Bad fact! Bad fact! Argh!

CHARLOTTE: Doctor, he's shrinking.

DOCTOR: Quick, Charley, while he's unconscious. The bouquet.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, right. Yes, that's right. Nice deep breaths.

DOCTOR: Make sure you can smell it too. Don't let the particles affect you again. I have other plans for them.

CHARLOTTE: What's that?

DOCTOR: The remains of your copy of Rookwood. If there's nowhere else to go I'm hoping the particles will be attracted back here. Come on, that's it. Home to roost.

(Rumble whoosh.)

CHARLOTTE: It's working.

DOCTOR: That's it. Quick, the box.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, er, here. You're not seriously suggesting we just shut it in a box?

DOCTOR: And in you go. There. Now, rosemary. John, Eleanor?

ELEANOR: Here you are, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Pile it up here. Mustn't let a single particle get out.

JOHN: The townsfolk are recovering. Is it over?

DOCTOR: Yes. No more fiction. No more giant highwayman.

CHARLOTTE: Talking of which, where is he?

TURPIN: Calm yourself, beast, or I'll lash you.

ELEANOR: Grey Girt!

JOHN: Doctor, he has your horse.

TURPIN: Out of my way!

DOCTOR: Mind out!

JOHN: Doctor, the villain is escaping!

DOCTOR: Yes, yes, but I wouldn't bother going after him. History will catch up with him soon enough.

CHARLOTTE: Is he really all bad in reality?

DOCTOR: I don't think anyone is *all* bad, Charlotte. But Turpin came closer than most. Now, I think it's time we made their way back to Broomwood Manor.

CHARLOTTE: I suspect the return trip will take us a lot longer than the journey here on Black Bess.

DOCTOR: Or would you prefer to slip back into a book, do a little time passes between chapters?

CHARLOTTE: No. I suppose I'll just have to put up with the inconvenience of real life. (sighs) It must be much easier to be fictional. You never need to visit the lavatory for a start.

DOCTOR: How could I have overlooked such a bonus?

ELEANOR: You are sure we cannot persuade you to stay for our wedding?

DOCTOR: Oh, it's very kind of you, Eleanor, but...

CHARLOTTE: He doesn't tend to stick around for the epilogues. The End, bye-bye, off to the next Once Upon A Time.

DOCTOR: What Charlotte means is that we have business elsewhere.

COACHMAN: Whoa. Whoa there.

DOCTOR: Ah.

CHARLOTTE: We made it, Doctor. Broomwood Manor.

DOCTOR: Journey's end.

JOHN: A melancholy homecoming, this, with my father dead and my mother-in-law demented.

RALPH: Ho there. John? John, my boy.

ELEANOR: Sir Ralph!

JOHN: Father! Can it be?

RALPH: My son!

JOHN: Father!

ELEANOR: Doctor, Sir Ralph has risen from the dead just as you did. Has the infection come again, then?

DOCTOR: Well, well, I never expected this. It seems fiction is being erased. Everything brought about by the Grel particles is being re-set. I wonder if that means the Tardis is no longer buried?

CHARLOTTE: Doctor, if Sir Ralph didn't die, then maybe...

SUSAN: Master. Oh, you're home safe.

JOHN: Susan! But that's wonderful.

SYBIL: Susan and I have been so worried about you both.

ELEANOR: We have been on such an adventure. The Doctor will explain.

SYBIL: Well, Doctor? Enlighten us.

DOCTOR: Hmm? Oh, er, oh, er, well now, er...

RALPH: Oh, don't pester the man so, Sybil. He's returned my son and daughter-in-law to me, and such a benison shall not go unrewarded.

DOCTOR: Oh, it's not me you should be thanking, Sir Ralph. John and Eleanor were no less instrumental in returning me to you.

SUSAN: Hello, Miss Charlotte. It's good to see you again.

CHARLOTTE: You too, Susan, you too.

SUSAN: No! It can't be. I thought that it was lost forever.

SYBIL: Susan? Whatever's the matter?

SUSAN: That jewel around Miss Charlotte's neck.

CHARLOTTE: What? Oh, goodness me. Oh, that's one of Dick Turpin's.

SUSAN: No, Miss. It's mine. The one that Turpin stole from me years back, the one that was my mother's.

SYBIL: Let me see. I know that necklace well. My sister wore it for many years, before bestowing it upon her beloved daughter.

RALPH: Can it be? Susan, my child, can it be?

SUSAN: Father?

RALPH: Daughter, stolen from me so many years ago, and at last returned.

JOHN: Sister. Oh, happy day. My father, my sister, and my love, all returned.

ELEANOR: Oh, John.

RALPH: Welcome to the family, my dear.

CHARLOTTE: Well, that's a turn-up for the books. Do you think Susan really is the long-lost sister?

DOCTOR: Oh, it's possible. Truth really can be stranger than fiction sometimes. Come on, you, time to go. We've a box to dispose of.

(Tardis door opens)

CHARLOTTE: Oh well, as long as they get a happy ending. Not everyone does. My mother - well, that is, Gypsy Charlotte's mother - was right. The Hangman does have his eye on Turpin, doesn't he, Doctor?

DOCTOR: The way he lived his life made his end fairly inevitable, I'm afraid. I don't think any mystical gypsy powers were needed to tell you what was to come.

(Tardis door closes.)

CHARLOTTE: But her other prophecy did come true, in a way. Gypsy Charlotte did die at the hands of her best friend, just as they were reunited. You handed me the box, after all.

DOCTOR: Best friend? I'm flattered.

CHARLOTTE: One day we will be. The very best of friends. Trust me.

DOCTOR: I do, Charlotte, I do.

REMINDER BOT: This is an automatic reminder from the Archive of Alexandria Four. You are in possession of an overdue book. Penalties will be exacted for overdue, lost or damaged items.

DOCTOR: Come on, we still need to get a replacement copy of Rookwood.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, so I can finish it at last. Oh, and then take it back to the Archive, of course.

(The Tardis dematerialises.)

CHARLOTTE: After all, what could possibly go wrong?